

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4585

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 9801

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: BIO DATA ON NEW CABINET

REF: SEOUL 9794

FOLLOWING ARE BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES ASSEMBLED FROM
EMBASSY FILES ON NEW ROKG CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED
DECEMBER 19, 1975:

PRIME MINISTER CHOE KYU-HA:

CHOE HAS BEEN SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS SINCE 1971. A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT HE IS A FORMER
FOREIGN MINISTER (1967-1971) AND AMBASSADOR TO MALAYSIA
(1964-1967). CHOE WAS BORN JULY 16, 1919 IN KANGWON
PROVINCE. HE WAS EDUCATED IN TOKYO AND WORKED IN MANCHURIA
AFTER PASSING JAPANESE HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE EXAM. HE WORKED
FOR U.S. MILITARY GOVERNMENT (1946-47), MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (1951) AND JOINED MOFA 1951 SERVING
IN JAPAN (1952-59), AND AS VICE FOREIGN MINISTER (1959-60).
CHOE RESIGNED FROM GOVT. WITH FALL OF PRESIDENT RHEE, HOWEVER,
RETURNED AS CONSULTANT TO ROK-JAPAN NEGOTIATIONS (1962-1964)
BEFORE APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO MALAYSIA. AS
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHOE WAS DEEPLY
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INVOLVED IN POLICY ASPECTS OF ROK FOREIGN POLICY AND AN

ACTIVE MEMBER PRIME MINISTER'S POLICY COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE. IN PAST, CHOE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS PEDANTIC, CAUTIOUS, AND AT TIMES BORING BUREAUCRAT. HE HAS HOWEVER BEEN RELATIVELY FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS. HE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN PRESIDENT PARK'S JULY 23 POLICY INITIATIVE AND TAKES CREDIT FOR ROKG NEGOTIATIONS WITH PERSIAN GULF OIL NATIONS ASSURING ROK CONTINUING OIL FLOW. AS PRIME MINISTER, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE A CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR, ESPECIALLY IN FOREIGN POLICY, BUT NOT LIKELY TO PLAY THE IMPORTANT DOMESTIC POLITICAL ROLE OF KIM CHONG-PIL.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - PAK TONG-CHIN:

PAK, A CAREER DIPLOMAT, HAS BEEN PERMANENT OBSERVER (PO) AT THE UNITED NATIONS SINCE MAY, 1975. PRIOR TO THAT HE SERVED AS AMBASSADOR AT THE EUROPEAN OFFICE IN GENEVA AND AS AMBASSADOR TO BRAZILIA (62) AND SAIGON (61) AS WELL AS SERVING A BRIEF TOUR AS VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (61). IN THE 1950'S PAK SERVED AT KOREAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, AND HAD A BITTER FEUD WITH HIS PREDECESSOR AS FOREIGN MINISTER, KIM TONG-CHO. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN SEOUL FIND HIM HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND ORGANIZED, CALLING HIM MORE PRECISE AND HARD-HEADED THINKER THAN HIS PREDECESSOR. AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE OBSERVERS SEE HIM AS ABLE, INTELLIGENT AND WELL-INFORMED. DESPITE LONG CAREER PRIMARILY LOGGED OVERSEAS, PAK HAS RETURNED OFTEN TO KOREA AND HAS KEPT HIS POTITICAL FENCES IN GOOD REPAIR. BORN IN 1922 AT TAEGU, PAK WAS EDUCATED IN LAW AT CHUO UNIVERSITY IN JAPAN.

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS, KIM CHI-YOL:

KIM, WHO HAS SERVED SINCE 1973 AS THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL, IS A CAREER OFFICIAL OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE. HE WAS ALSO DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE KCIA IN 1970-1973. KIM WAS BORN SEPTEMBER 15, 1921 IN NORTH KYONGSANG PROVINCE. HE RECEIVED A LAW DEGREE FROM CHUO UNIVERSITY, JAPAN IN 1943, PASSED THE JAPANESE BAR AND BEGAN TO PRACTICE LAW IN CONFIDENTIAL

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TOKYO IN 1945. KIM BEGAN HIS CAREER WITH THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IN 1946 AS A PROSECUTOR IN TAEGU AND BY 1958 WAS CHIEF PROSECUTOR, SEOUL DISTRICT PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE. HE BEGAN TO PRACTICE LAW PRIVATELY IN 1961, WAS APPOINTED TO THE CENTRAL ELECTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN 1963, AND TO THE KCIA IN 1970. HIS EFFECTIVENESS AS PROSECUTOR GENERAL DURING EMERGENCY MEASURES PERIOD IS INDICATION THAT HE CAN BE COUNTED ON TO ADROITLEY ADMINISTER

HARD ROKG DOMESTIC LINE WHICH HAS BEEN LAID DOWN.

SIN HYON-HWAK - MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS:

SIN WAS ELECTED AS A DRP ASSEMBLYMAN IN 1973. HIS BACKGROUND IS IN ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, BOTH IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS. SIN WAS BORN OCT 29, 1920 IN NORTH KYONGSANG PROVINCE AND WAS EDUCATED IN LAW AT KYONGSONG IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY (SNU). HE SERVED WITH THE JAPANESE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS IN 1943-44, TAUGHT LAW AT TAEJU UNIVERSITY IN 1947 AND ENTERED THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN 1950. IN 1958 HE BECAME VICE MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION AND IN 1959 MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION. SIN WAS JAILED IN 1960-61 FOLLOWING THE FALL OF THE RHEE GOVERNMENT. SINCE 1963 HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND ACTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AFFAIRS. HE WAS PRESIDENT OF TONGHAE ELECTRIC POWER CO. (1968-73). SIN IS KNOWN AS A FOLLOWER OF RECENTLY DECEASED DRP FINANCE CHAIRMAN KIM SONG-KON.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES - CHOE KAK-KYU:

BORN IN 1933 IN KANGWON PROVINCE, CHOE GRADUATED FROM SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (SNU) IN POLITICAL SCIENCE. SINCE 1974, CHOE HAS SERVED AS VICE MINISTER OF THE ECONOMIC PLANNING BOARD (EPB), FOLLOWING SERIES OF TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENTS IN FINANCE MINISTRY INCLUDING LEADING BERTHS IN CUSTOMS, TREASURY BUREAU AND TAX OFFICE. ONE LONG TIME AMERICAN ECONOMIC OFFICER CONSIDERED CHOE'S WORK LACKLUSTRE. AS ONE OF NAM DUCK WOO'S PROTEGES, CHOE REPLACES A NAM FOLLOWER AND THUS WILL MAINTAIN INFLUENCE OF THE POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE NAM IN THIS MINISTRY.
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KIM SONG-CHIN - MINISTER OF CULTURE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION:

KIM HAS BEEN SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY AND SPOKESMAN SINCE 1971. HE IS A REPORTER BY PROFESSION. KIM WAS BORN OCTOBER 14, 1931 IN HWANGHAE PROVINCE, GRADUATED IN ECONOMICS FROM KORYO UNIVERSITY IN 1958 AND STUDIED JOURNALISM AT NORTHWESTERN ON A STATE DEPT GRANT. HE BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A REPORTER WITH HANKUK ILBO IN 1956 AND MOVED TO ORIENT PRESS IN 1957. HE WAS STATIONED IN WASHINGTON AS THE ORIENT PRESS CORRESPONDENT IN 1964, WAS PROMOTED TO POLITICAL EDITOR IN 1967, AND BEGAN WORK AT THE BLUE HOUSE IN 1970 AS PRESS SECRETARY. KIM IS ASTUTE, WELL-INFORMED, GENERALLY CANDID AND SENSIBLE AND MAINTAINS GOOD RELATIONS WITH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AS WELL AS EMBASSY OFFICIALS. HE IS ALSO AMBITIOUS AND, IF NECESSARY, RUTHLESS. AS PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY, HE HAS PLAYED MAJOR ROLE IN ATTEMPTS TO BOLSTER THE PRESIDENT'S IMAGE WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS. HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ALONG THESE LINES AT MCUI IN AN ATTEMPT TO PRESENT A BETTER PICTURE OF THE ROK TO THE WORLD. SOME KOREAN OBSERVERS HAVE SPECULATED THAT HIS APPOINTMENT PRESAGES A STEP-UP IN EFFORTS TO BUILD IDEOLOGICAL BASE FOR PARK REGIME.

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS - PAK WON-KUN:

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FORMERLY SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT PAK ON NATIONAL SECURITY, PAK WON-KUN'S CHIEF ASSIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN INVARIABLY MILITARY UNTIL 1972. AFTER COMMISSIONING AS 2ND LIEUTENANT IN 1946 FOLLOWING GRADUATION FROM ROK MILITARY ACADEMY, PAK BECAME COMMANDER OF 20TH REGIMENT, 11TH DIVISION IN 1951. WITHIN 10 YEARS, HE ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE ROK 5TH DIVISION AND THEN THE 3RD CORPS, MOVING EVENTUALLY IN 1972 TO COMMAND THE 2ND ROK ARMY.

AMERICAN OBSERVERS DESCRIBE HIM AS MILD-MANNERED AND RESERVED. ONE KOREAN JOURNALIST KNOWS HIM AS AN "INTENSE PAK LOYALIST." HE WAS BORN IN INCHON IN 1922.

FIRST MINISTER WITHOUT PORFOLIO - SIN HYONG-SIK:

SINCE 1973, SIN HAS BEEN AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE RULING DRP AND CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE COMMITTEE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA). SIN BEGAN HIS POLITICAL CAREER AS AN INDEPENDENT, RUNNING FOR AN NA SEAT IN 1960. DEFEATED, HE CAME BACK AS RULING PARTY CANDIDATE AND WON SEAT, DEFEATING INCUMBENT. FIRST MIN WITHOUT PORTFOLIO TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH JAPANESE RELATIONS BUT THIS IS ONLY RULE OF THUMB. DRP PARTY SPOKESMAN FROM 1971-73, SIN'S CHIEF ASSET APPEARS TO BE HIS PARTY LOYALTY. BORN IN 1926 IN SOUTH CHOLLA PROVINCE, SIN WAS ONE OF TWO KOREANS (OF 10) WHO WITH 1ST CALVARY, WENT FROM NAKTONG TO THE YALU DURING KOREAN WAR AND SURVIVED.

2ND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO - MIN PYONG-KWON:

SINCE 1973, MIN HAS BEEN A YUCHONGHOE MEMBER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HAS SERVED ON ITS POLICY COMMITTEE. PRIMARILY A MILITARY MAN UNTIL HE RETIRED IN 1963 AS LT. GENERAL, MIN ENTERED POLITICS. HE WAS ELECTED AS DRP MEMBER TO 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH BUT NOT THE 9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HIS YUCHONGHAE APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT PAK SOON FOLLOWED. IN HIS INCARNATION AS A MILITARY MAN, HIS ASSIGNMENTS (FOLLOWING A 1951 COMMAND OF THE 21ST DIVISION), WERE LARGELY ADMINISTRATIVE INCLUDING JOB AS CHIEF OF PERSONNEL DIVISION, MILITARY AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AT NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFENSE MINISTRY AND DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION (1957-1963). AMERICAN MILITARY OBSERVERS GENERALLY FIND MIN AMIABLE, "INDEPENDENT MINDED IN HIS VIEW OF THE US.", AGGRESSIVE BUT OFTEN IMPATIENT. HIS ASSEMBLY CAREER AS REPRESENTATIVE OF KOCHANG AND HAMYANG WAS RELATIVELY UNDISTINGUISHED ALTHOUGH HE DID SERVE TERM AS CHAIRMAN OF DEFENSE COMMITTEE. 2ND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN AS ECONOMIC ASSIGNMENT. IT IS DOUBTFUL THIS WILL BE CHIEF THRUST OF JOB DURING MIN'S TENURE.

BLUE HOUSE SPOKESMAN, YIM PANG-HYON:

SINCE 1970, YIM SERVED AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT PAK FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS WITH RANK OF VICE MINISTER. BEFORE 1970, HOWEVER, YIM HAD ACCUMULATED MUCH KOREAN NEWSPAPER

EXPERIENCE WORKING FOR CHOSUN ILBO AND HAPTONG NEWS AGENCY AS A REPORTER (1954-56) AND LATER IN VARIOUS MANAGERIAL POSITIONS FOR THE HANKUK ILBO (AND OTHER PAPERS.) HE CONCURRENTLY HAS LECTURED TO NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE AND CHUNGANG AND HANYANG UNIVERSITIES ON REGULAR BASIS. U.S. PRESS OFFICERS HERE NOTE THAT HE ONCE WAS EDITOR OF PRIMARILY ECONOMIC NEWSPAPER. HE HAS IMPRESSED AMERICANS HERE AS SOFT-SPOKEN AND FRIENDLY WITH EXPERTISE IN BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND ECONOMIC REPORTING. IN 1967, HE WAS KOREAN NIEMAN FELLOW AT HARVARD.

PROSECUTOR GENERAL, YI SON-CHUNG:

SINCE 1973, CHONG HAS BEEN CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATION, THE BUREAU CHARGED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND NECESSARY LEGISLATION FOR THE GOVERNMENT. PRIOR TO THIS AND HIS STINT BEGINNING IN 1971 AS VICE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CHONG'S EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN LARGELY PROVINCIAL, CENTERING AROUND TAEJU WHERE HE BEGAN HIS LAW CAREER IN THE DISTRICT PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE. CHONG IS KNOWN IN LEGAL CIRCLES AS SCHOLARLY, HARD WORKING, BUT SOMEWHAT COLORLESS. BORN IN NORTH KYONGSANG PROVINCE IN JANUARY, 1921, CHONG IS A GRADUATE OF SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (SNU).

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATION - CHONG CHIN-U:
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CHONG WAS FORMERLY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BOARD OF AUDIT AND INSPECTION AND SERVED PRIMARILY IN BLUE HOUSE TECHNICAL POSITIONS SINCE 1963, INVOLVED IN "STATE AFFAIRS." IN 1971, HE LEFT BLUE HOUSE FOR VICE MINISTERSHIP OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE. USIS OBSERVERS HAVE CALLED HIM "QUIET AND THOUGHTFUL, NOT OPENLY SENSITIVE AND AGGRESSIVE, BUT HE FITS THE KOREAN TRADITION OF A WISE AND CAREFUL ADMINISTRATOR. HE HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE." CHONG WAS BORN IN 1928 IN SOUTH CHUNGCHONG PROVINCE.
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